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MYSTERY IN HISPANIC-MOZARABIC RITE: FROM LITURGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY TO ECCLESIOLOGICAL PRAXIS

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RESUMEN

Una de las características de la eucología hispana es su enfoque en el misterio conocido, mediatizado y participado en el rito a través de la fe. Esta división va a guiar nuestra reflexión sobre el concepto del misterio. Primero, el rito hispano-mozárabe es orientado hacia *ad consideranda divinis Mysteriis sacramenta*. Segundo, para los mozárabes, el misterio no es un simple recordatorio de la incognoscibilidad de Dios, sino apunta hacia una revelación trinitaria. Finalmente, la eucología hispana se esfuerza en indicar la manera adecuada de celebrar los *mysteriis solemnitis*.

Palabras clave: rito hispano-mozarabe, fe, misterio, sacramentos.

ABSTRACT

One of the characteristics of the Hispanic euchology is its focus on the mystery known, mediated and participated in the rite by faith. This tri-partite division will determine our reflection on mystery. First, Mozarabic Rite is oriented *ad consideranda divinis Mysteriis sacramenta*. Second, for Mozarabs, the mystery is not so much a reminder of the unknowability of God but means his Trinitarian revelation. Finally, the Hispanic euchology is marked by concern for adequately celebrating *mysteriis solemnitis*.

Keywords: Hispanic-mozarabic rite, faith, mystery, sacraments.

The Hispanic-Mozarabic liturgy is shrouded in mystery: not many details are known about the way it was celebrated and historians argue about the nature of the identity of those who saved the rite from sinking into oblivion - the Mozarabs¹. They lived in a difficult socio-political reality that prevailed on the Iberian Peninsula after the Arabs crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 711 AD². The Mozarabs remained Christians, although externally they accepted the practices of the new masters of Iberia – they underwent the Arabisation of Spanish and took on some of their habits. They lived amongst Arabs, hence the term ‘Mozarabs’ that refers to those who were ‘like the Arabs’, *musta’rib* (however, this term is of later origin and comes from a Christian territory; they were actually described by the Arabs as the ‘Nazarenes’ or ‘People of the Book’)³.

Although they remained loyal to their faith, it did not happen without significant economic costs (the permission to carry out Christian rituals must have been subject to a special tax) or painful social exclusion (inability to be promoted to certain ranks of public administration) which they experienced on a daily basis⁴. They carried out Christian rituals in strong hermeneutical tension: they believed it had a negative impact on their actual existential situation, in which being a Christian had a variety of social implications⁵.

The Spanish liturgy is a broad concept as it covers not only the Mozarabic period, which passed overshadowed by the tension between Christians and Muslims and the controversial theory of adoptionism⁶, but also an earlier patristic and Visigothic period. Mozarabs saved the liturgical tradition of Spanish churches of the first centuries of Christianity, which remained under a significant influence of not only Gallican but also African tradition (thus, Eastern tradition)⁷. It is evident in many theological themes that penetrated the Span-

1 The article uses information gathered through grant “Christ vs. Muhammad. Mozarabic christology in the light of liturgical sources of the spanish rite”, funded from resources of the National Science Centre, allotted following the decision no. DEC- 2011/01/D/HS1/00712.

2 A. CHRISTYS, *Christians in Al-Andalus 711-1000*, London – New York, Routledge, 2010.

3 E. LAPIEDRA, *Cómo los musulmanes llamaban a los cristianos hispánicos*, Alicante, Diputación Provincial de Alicante, 1997; Y. BEALE-RIVAYA, “The history and evolution of the term “mozarab””, in *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 4 (2010), 51-71.

4 J. F. RIVERA, “Formas de convivencia y heterodoxias en el primer siglo mozárabe”, in *Historia mozárabe*, Toledo, Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozarabes, 1978, 3-16; M. A. GALLEGÓ, “The languages of medieval Iberia and their religious dimension”, in *Medieval Encounters*, 1 (2003), 107-139.

5 Cf. L. PEÑARROJA, *Cristianos bajo el Islam: los mozárabes hasta la Reconquista de Valencia*, Madrid, Gredos, 1993.

6 D. URVOY, “La pensée religieuse des Mozarabes face à l’Islam”, in *Traditio*, 39 (1983), 419-432; R. J. PEDRAJAS, *Historia de los mozárabes en Al Ándalus: mozárabes y musulmanes en Al Ándalus: ¿relaciones de convivencia?, ¿o de antagonismo y lucha?*, Córdoba, Almuzara, 2013.

7 V. JANERAS, “Elements orientaux en la liturgie visigotique”, in *Miscelánea Litúrgica Catalana*, VI (1995), 93-127.

ish euchology and are still expressed in particular masses⁸. Is it important for the understanding of liturgy from the perspective of mystery and sacraments? How does the Spanish liturgy see the mutual relationship between *mysterium* and *sacramentum*? With the help of *Missale Hispano-Mozarabicum* (MHM), I will attempt to present the Mozarabic understanding of mystery that is dual in nature: it focuses on the epistemological aspect (the liturgical way of reaching *mysterium*) and ecclesiological connotations for Christian life. Let us start with outlining the relationship between these two terms. What did ‘sacrament’ and ‘mystery’ mean for the Mozarabs?

I. MYSTERIUM IN HOC SACRAMENTO: TOWARDS ‘THE TRUTH OF SACRAMENT’

Although in the patristic period these two terms – *mysterium* and *sacramentum* – were still synonyms⁹, the first attempts were made in the Spanish liturgy at that time to describe their specific, distinct theological meanings. Some texts still seemed quite ambivalent (as it was in the case of the ‘heavenly sacrament’¹⁰), but a perspective that these two concepts completed each other was dominant. What was characteristic for the rite was frequent placing of these two terms next to each other, which demonstrated the strong theological connection between them: the term ‘sacraments of mysteries’ remains in harmony with the strict technical use of the term ‘sacrament’ to describe sacred rites, such as baptism, anointment and above all Eucharist (sometimes considered per excellence as the ‘Sacrament’). But the Spanish liturgy also saw ‘sacraments’ in the Old Testament as actions or things that had a deep spiritual meaning. Hence it mentions the ‘sacraments of the old law’ (*priscae legis sacramenta*)¹¹, but also ‘the magnificent mysteries of fast’ (*ieiuniorum magnifica sacramenta*)¹². The scope of meaning of the term ‘sacrament’ remains in the service of the understanding of what *mysterium* is.

8 J. M. FERRER, “La Eucaristía en rito hispano-mozárabe. Gestualidad y ambiente para la celebración”, in *Toletana*, 1(1999), 59-88.

9 Cf. C. ROBLES GARCÍA, “La liturgia mozárabe”, in *Breviarium Gothicum secundum Regulam Beatissimi Isidori*, Edición facsimil, red. J. Paniagua, León, Universidad de León, 2004.

10 *In Circumcisione Domini*, oratio admonitionis.

11 *In Dominico in ramis palmarum*, oratio.

12 *Feria VI in tertia hebdomada Quadragesime*, ad pacem.

1. MYSTERII SACRAMENTA: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MYSTERY AND SACRAMENT IN HISPANIC RITE

In one of the opening prayers of the mass, there is an appeal to experience liturgy *consideranda divinis Mysteriis sacramenta*¹³. It indicates sacramental access to mysteries: they are not accessible in their own right, they are accessible through rite. Or to be precise, they highlight two dimensions of rite: external ('sacrament') and internal ('mystery'). In this sense, it can be said that sacraments include mysteries, they are their transmission channel through which this contact is possible¹⁴. Therefore, the rite will indicate the 'sacrament of the Incarnation' (*in sacramento incarnationis amplecteres*)¹⁵, the 'hidden sacraments of Passion' (*sacramenta abscondida passionis suae*)¹⁶, which they reveal mysteries and make them accessible, but they still do not exhaust their 'mysteriousness'. Sacrament reveals and hides at the same time: also in them there is a hidden sign of what a Christian is about to participate in: *ut hoc quod his sacramentis figuratum fore cognoscitur, in nostris cordibus impleatur*¹⁷. During the mass for the occasion of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary it is mentioned that *mysticis praefiguratum mysteriis*¹⁸. Full understanding of the mystery will take place in the eschatological dimension. Sacrament in the Mozarabic liturgy is not merely an external sign pointing to different contents, but is a meeting space in the ritual *hodie*. At the same time, such understanding of *sacramentum* reveals the interest of liturgy in reaching the 'truth of the sacrament' and discovering in whose service the celebration of sacrament takes place. It happens through moral purification (fast and prayer), through which *sacramenta mysteriorum*¹⁹ manifest themselves.

From the euchological texts of MHM comes the understanding of the mystery as a special way of experiencing the divine grace and mercy, endowment and participation, as well as the closeness of God. That is why liturgy sets itself as the main task the appeal to worshippers to avoid trivialising the mysteries only because they are not directly accessible to them (hence the appeal for *sedula mysteria*!), but instead to treat them as an expression of God's love, who just like a friend that shares a mystery with another friend, shares it with man.

13 *In III Dominico Quadragesimae*, oratio admonitionis.

14 Cf. P. Roszak, „La fe: entre manifestación y secreto. En torno a la eucología hispano-mozárabe” in: *Scripta Theologica* 46(2014), 39-58.

15 *In Circumcisione Domini*, post nomina.

16 *Feria IV in hebdomada maiore*, benedictio.

17 *In die Sancto Paschae*, oratio admonitionis.

18 *In diem conceptionis sanctae Mariae Virginis*, illatio.

19 *Feria IV in quarta hebdomada Quadragesime*, illatio.

That is why liturgy appeals: *dignis semper tractare mysteriis et puris pacisque praecordiis celebrare*²⁰.

But what does it mean to treat with dignity?

It means preparing our heart to be able to carry the burden of divine mysteries and be able to open up to this gift. It is a meeting with mysterium that takes place in the sacrament and it needs to be seen within the perspective of Revelation, which for the Mozarabic rite does not appear as an event closed in history but as one that is characterised by great fertility and that manifests itself in a privileged way in the existence of the Church: not only in its teaching, but also in its sacramental action. That is why a special characteristic feature of Spanish euchology are the themes referring to the vision and sense of history that shed light on the current situation of Mozarabs who are defending themselves from an annihilation through liturgical identity.

The Spanish liturgy focuses on the sacramental celebration of mysterium, which is highlighted by a prayer in one of the masses, in which Jesus Christ is asked to *vos mysterii et instruat et muniat Sacramento*. In an order characteristic for the rite it is indicated that sacramental experiencing of mystery is a way for the worshippers to be instructed and strengthened. They should not concentrate only on what is given but they should open up to what is experienced because cosmovision that is operated by rite is not limited to a sign but reaches also to its meaning. That is why, in a different fragment, invocation to Jesus Christ starts with the words: having completed the mysteries of this sacrifice (*expletis sacrificiorum mysteriis*).²¹

The relationship between sacrament and mystery is also illustrated in one of the prayers of the thirteenth *post sanctus* Sunday in Ordinary Time:

qui, cum Patre manens, æternitatis tuæ prospectu definieras unam tibi de gentibus congregandam Ecclesiam copulare, acuius copulationis mysterium in hoc sacramento corporis et sanguinis tui vera exhibitioe complesti; ad inhærendam tibi emundans illam aqua baptismatis, exhilarans oleo unctionis, satians pane corporis et lætificans vino effusi cruoris, ipse Redemptor eius, ipse pro ea factus pretium emptionis²².

The sacrament of Eucharist expresses a profound mystery: euchology not only focuses on the contemplation about the nature of presence of transcendental Lord in the form of bread and wine. The attention is rather on the

20 *Feria VI in tertia hebdomada Quadragesimae*, ad pacem.

21 *In diem allisionis infantium*, completuria: Precamur, Domine Iesu Christe, ut expletis sacrificiorum mysteriis.

22 *In XIII dominico*, post sanctus.

mystery of unity of Jesus Christ and his Church, which dates back to eternity. The Sacrament of Lord's Flesh and Blood points to *mysterium copulationis*, the unity of Jesus Christ and the Church, which truly captures (*vera exhibitio*) its deepest sense²³. It is difficult not to be under the impression that eucharology is governed by the logic of St. Paul's *mysterion*, which means implementing the divine plan of salvation, hidden centuries ago and fully revealed in Jesus Christ. It seems to be indicated in a further fragment of the prayer, which mentions salvific involvement of Jesus Christ in order to prepare the Church to a full union with himself: what is significant is the fact that this road towards purification, strengthening and filling up the Church is described through reference to the sacraments of initiation (baptism, anointing, Eucharist).

At Easter Friday mass (*In VI feria Paschae*) a similar desire comes to the fore in *oratio admonitionis* that paints a wonderful fishing scene taking place after the resurrection, which serves to express our plea to be included in the group of 'mystic fish' (*inter mysticos pisces, cibus esse Domini*). The road towards building authentic unity leads through 'following the truth of a wonderful sacrament, and loving and above all maintaining unity' (*Subsequamur igitur sacramenti admirabilis veritatem, diligentes, ac tenentes principaliter unitatem*)²⁴. The circumstances in which Mozarabic Christians had to live meant that they had to hang onto Jesus's cross, wait to be fished out and maintain unity in trying times.

A similar ecclesiological theme appears in *illatio* of the mass of the Epiphany (*Apparitio Domini*), where this lofty and mysterious sacrament refers to the union of Jesus Christ with the Church²⁵. That is why the Church is defined through sacraments: its uniqueness comes from the fact that it is "united through sacrament, not through location" (*singularis sacramento, non loco*). Sacrament is not only a coat for mystery, a shell protecting its valuable contents, but a source of its transforming power, *ut per transfusionem caelestis atque invisibilis sacramenti*²⁶. That is why liturgy asks for "the consecration of sacrament", for the inclusion of the sign into the life-giving stream of grace²⁷.

23 Cf. C. AILLET, *Les mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique (IXe–XIIe siècle)*, Madrid, Casa de Velazquez, 2010.

24 *In VI feria Paschae*, *oratio admonitionis*: *Subsequamur igitur sacramenti admirabilis veritatem, diligentes, ac tenentes principaliter unitatem*.

25 *In apparitione Domini*, *alia*.

26 *In VII dominico de cotidiano*, *post pridie*.

27 *In VI dominico de cotidiano*, *alia*: *Mereatur petitio effectum, contritio solatium, consecratio sacramentum*.

2. MYSTERII RECORDATUS. CELEBRATORY DIMENSION

The knowledge that a liturgical assembly was convoked to carry out mysteries comes to light in many euchological texts of the Mozarabic rite: it is not a regular gathering of worshippers because *inter sacra mysteria constituiti*. It means rooting and embedding into mystery, not only executing it externally. This *constituiti* means ultimately that by participating in liturgy we are admitted into the privileged space of access to mystery, which is not pure negativity (what cannot be known), but which shows its positive power and becomes an opportunity to get to know the truth in all its depth. Reaching out to the mystery is the pulse of life of the Church, which sees itself as included in mystery.

The immersion of Christian existence in mysteries is an essential act for *actio liturgica*, describing at the same time the identity of the participants of liturgy. Mysteries mentioned before in *oratio admonitionis* have a generic sense: it is not about specific truths, inaccessible for human intellect, but the closeness of hidden God who we get to know to in the celebration of Eucharist, in the sacramental word and action. The Spanish liturgy highlights this way the connection between mysteries and the celebrations that make up the liturgical year, making sure to ‘celebrate in honour of Your name mysteries appropriate for all celebrations’ (*omnium sollemnitatum in tuo nomine mysteria celebrare*)²⁸. These are celebrations of mystery – *mysterii sollemnitate* – *celebrations in which mysterium becomes present*²⁹. That is why liturgy will be in the service of absorbing *odore fragrantia*³⁰, the good smell, the fragrance of God’s mysterium, which results in the explosion of happiness and spurt of heart in the hour of liturgical celebration: ‘We should all desire these moments, in which human weakness is invited to participate in this great and venerable mystery, through which God leans towards accepting the sacrifice offered to Him by man’³¹. It is also important to mention that sacrifice is understood not only as ‘giving up something valuable’, entering into contact, establishing communication and forming a relationship. This does not change the fact that in his life man serves God but this service has a certain degree of mystery: ‘perfectly presenting in front of You the mystery of our service (ministry)’, as Mozarabs pray on the day when they commemorate Andria, Natalia and their companions (16 June)³². The term *mysterium* appears next to the verb *excolere*³³, *invocare*³⁴,

28 *In II Dominico de cotidiano*, illatio.

29 *In diem conceptionis sanctae Mariae Virginis*, post nomina.

30 *In diem Sancti Augustini*, ad pacem.

31 *In I Dominico de cotidiano*, oratio admonitionis.

32 *Perfekte coram te exhibentes nostrae mysterium servitutis*.

33 *In V Dominico Paschae*, illatio.

34 *In VI Dominico Paschae*, oratio admonitionis.

*recordare*³⁵ or *celebrare*³⁶ (in its various derivatives), which again highlights its “transferability” and mediation.

3. MYSTERIUM AND REVELATION

In the light of Spanish liturgical texts, *mysterium* has to be understood in personal context as growing interpersonal intimacy possible thanks to the Revelation that expresses the intimacy of the Holy Trinity. That is why the hidden nature of mystery is related to the intimacy of the Trinitarian life and does not refer solely to cognitive limitations. There is no doubt that Mozarabs saw *mysterium* mainly as a moment of “revelation” and communication (following St. Paul’s model of understanding mystery) whose task is to make visible what is invisible, but at the same time they were aware how insufficient the means of expression that they had were. *Mysterium* uses terms and images to express God’s mystery, which is not pure cognition but a reviving encounter with grace³⁷ that enriches Christian life because *fidei sacramenta locupletant*³⁸. This encounter is reviving also for the mind that feels weak on the road to the full knowledge of God and needs the support of grace.

II. THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF MYSTERIUM: TOWARDS SALVIFIC REALITY

Mysterium is reality so full of sense that this sense cannot be contained so we are dealing with a sort of *excessum*, the surplus of meaning. That is why liturgical epistemology of the Spanish rite emphasises salvific appearance of God in the Revelation. Mystery does not want to enclose God in the horizon of finiteness but to demonstrate His inscrutability and show in a positive light the anthropological openness of man towards the truth (expressed by scholasticism as *capax veritatis*), enabling all cognitive progress. This hunger for the truth is satisfied by the incarnate Word of God, which becomes *mysterium* per excellence. That is why the mystery remains in close relation to the event of Incarnation, becoming almost its synonym and often referring to the most important salvific events from the life of Jesus Christ. It is perfectly illustrated by laudatory *illatio* from the fourth Easter Sunday, when it talks about ‘great and admirable mysterium of piety’ (*magno pietatis tuæ ammirandóque mystério*) understood as Incarnation, thanks to which Jesus Christ was – as we read further – *manifestatus in carne, iustificatus in spiritu, ostensus in Angelis, præ-*

35 Idem.

36 *In Circumcisione Domini*, oratio admonitionis.

37 *Feria II in quarta hebdomada Quadragesime*.

38 *In VI Dominico de Adventu*, ad pacem.

*dicatus in gentibus, creditus in hoc mundo, assumptus in gloria, de inferni nos periculis liberasti*³⁹.

1. MYSTERIUM AS *MANIFESTATIO*

For Mozarabs, mystery is a Trinitarian appearance of God for the benefit of people – He is *philantropos* in its deepest sense⁴⁰. That is why the liturgical epistemology of rite does not focus as much on human efforts to reach God, which points to a different paradigm: participation in knowledge that God has about Himself. The paths of this participation lead through moral effort to “adjust” the mind to the sublime truths and focus on good moral disposition that widens human cognitive capabilities. This is why for Mozarabs mysteries do not constitute some oppressive form but, paradoxically, mean liberation, also in intellectual sense. Getting to know mysteries ends in adoration, their proclamation transforms into a hymn of glory and thanksgiving.

However, the revelation of mystery and its liturgical proclamation does not void their source mysteriousness, because they are not solely hidden or misunderstood things. Even when faith has already shed its light (*comprehensio*) on them, they do not lose their mysteriousness. Mystery calls on man to appear *coram Deo*, because this is the best angle from which to get to know the truth. This hope for ability to fully fathom the mystery is based on the fact that God is *secretorum omnium cognitor*, who knows all the secrets of human fate and what man needs is not so much instruction as love, which contains awareness and language, which sharpens spiritual senses and allows to establish an appropriate relation between the *hodie* of celebration and the finiteness of God. Liturgy creates space of relation with mystery, affective and intellectual bonds so that transmission of mysteries can take place. Mystery calls for more love, not more cognition because it is love that opens us up cognitively.

Mystery highlights and defends God’s transcendence in relation to all creation, but on the other hand, it refers to grace as a gift of granted cognition. It makes a participant of liturgy recognise the need for revelation, and it does not mean that his cognitive abilities are low but that he recognises their insufficiency. The Mozarabic rite does it in a specific way, through questions, just like when it poses a question to God Himself: *Quid poterit, o piissima Trinitas Deus noster, condigne tibi infirmitas humanae fragilitatis tribuere, quae tantis facinorum ponderibus praegravatur cotidie?*⁴¹.

39 In IV Dominico Paschae, illatio.

40 Cf. A. IVORRA, “Sentido espiritual del Padrenuestro en la liturgia hispana. El tiempo ‘Cotidiano’”, in *Estudios Trinitarios*, 44(2010), 494.

41 *Littaniae ante diem sancti Cipriani*, ad orationem Dominica.

2. DISCOVERING *MYSTERIUM CHRISTI*

Amongst mysteries, the most important is *mysterium humanitatis Christi*, which is treated by Spanish euchology as an event that renews man and widens epistemological horizons because thanks to Jesus' Incarnation the mysteries become clearer, more accessible: as one of the prayers underlines, *adventus sui faciat mysteriis luminata*⁴². Accepting Jesus Christ, who is called by liturgy *Restaurator aeternae lucis*, chases away the darkness of error with the power of his light, allowing the probing of deep realities.

It is worth noting that the mysterious and sacramental logic expresses an essential feature of the great Spanish euchological deposit, bringing to light a number of important theological issues, such as the transcendence of God and His unfathomable intentions towards man, salvific efficiency of the mystery of the Incarnation of Divine Word, and gratuitous nature of granted gifts. It is the fact that these gifts are given to us for free as a sign of the pure grace of God, formulated as a sublime-sounding principle that 'grace comes before nature' (*gratia anteverteret naturam*⁴³), that constitutes a background for the theology of mystery. In order to comprehend the Mozarabic understanding of mystery, we need to locate correctly the theological coordinates of rite, which will bring out the broad range of meanings of this concept.

Sacraments remain in the service of Christ's *mysterium*: that is why liturgy in *completuria* of the Mass on New Year's Day asks for the merits of Christ's sacraments (*sacramentorum tuorum meritis*) to make worshippers go through earthly experiences without damage to their fate⁴⁴. Life testimony deeply depends on living the mysteries of the Saviour.

III. LIVING ACCORDING TO THE MYSTERY: TOWARDS ECCLESIAL PRAXIS

For the Mozarabic liturgy, the mentioned mystery translates into a profound change in lifestyle, which becomes an existence according to the mystery. That is how the above mentioned mass of Easter Friday expresses this *praxis* resulting from understanding of mystery:

42 *Ad nonan pro indulgentia, oratio.*

43 *In diem Conceptionis Sanctae Mariae Virginis, alia:* Ineffabilis Deus Immaculatam Virginem Mariam in mundi principio prænuntiavit, sacratissimum mysterium, cæleste prodigium, ut grátia anteverteret naturam.

44 *In initio anni, completuria.*

Pro quibus mysteriis ac miraculis hunc diem apud tuam clementiam sacrificiis commendantes, petimus a te, Redemptore pio et Domino, ut hodierni mysterii recordatus, spolians nos veterem hominem cum actibus suis, induas illum qui secundum Dominum creatus est, in iustitia et sanctitate veritatis⁴⁵.

‘Shedding’ the old man recalls the sacrament of baptism, in which a worshipper is immersed in Lord’s mysteries. It happens through faith, whose power lies in the fact that it includes us into God’s intimate life. As Felix Maria Arocena⁴⁶ points out in an important research paper about *fides* in the Spanish liturgy, faith reveals mysteries to the baptised worshipper, not so much because they are stripped of their transcendence but in a sense that a special path that gives access to mysterium and allows its penetration becomes open. The result of being in the presence of mysterium is also a better and deeper knowledge of man who is hungry for mysteries and this is expressed in his ability to constantly exceed himself. The light shown to us does not mean that the darkness does not exist but that it does not have the final word: this belongs to *fides integra* that constitutes the key to the liturgical exegesis that taking place in the Spanish rite. Its task is to discover what Mozarabs referred to as *in illa mysticum*⁴⁷, like when during one of the masses in the period of Lent the worshippers are told the pericope about a man who was blind since birth but was healed by Jesus and see it as a picture of the current situation of the whole humanity: the blind man’s opening eyes are not able to cope with the excess of light, at the beginning he does not see people (he thinks they are trees) until his eyes get used to the brightness and he sees Jesus. Hidden in this story is the paradigm of the liturgical life of Mozarabs: sacramental celebration of mysteries means letting in the light that penetrates man and opens him up to the full cognition of the reality that surrounds him. The light comes from the Lord, it is His initiative – man’s response is making sure that this light, which symbolises sacraments, is not dimmed by any obstacle.

1. PARTICIPATIO THROUGH FAITH

The encounter with mystery takes place through persistent participation in recurring celebrations, which due to their frequency should not be underesti-

45 *In VI feria Paschæ*, alia.

46 Cf. F. M. AROCENA, “Teologia simbolica della fede nel Missale Hispano-Mozarabicum”, in *Rivista liturgica*, 1 (2013), 185-203.

47 *In III Dominico de quadragesime*: Erigamus, quæso, dilectissimi fratres, corda nostra ad consideranda divini Mystèrii sacramenta. Lèctio etenim sancti Evangélii, quæ hodièrna die ad audiendum vos fecit esse devòtos efficiat etiam æternitatis fructibus opulèntos. Et sicut auditu eam, fide integra percepistis, ita quoque fidèli devotióne quiddam in illa mysticum requirátis.

mated, quite the contrary: as one of the Mozarabic prayers points out – *deseabile*: frequent participation in celebration sharpens sensitivity and intellectual power, similarly to vision that needs to adjust to an object to present a good picture with the right focus. Liturgy sees itself as giving ‘access to Lord’s mystery’ (*accedentes ad Domini mysterium*⁴⁸), calling on us at the same time ‘to appreciate the mystery of our redemption’ (*redemptionis nostræ perpendentes mysterium*⁴⁹). Significantly, a Latin term *perpendentes* that means specific expression, examination was used here: it describes an adequate attitude towards the mystery that Mozarabs should adopt. They should try and understand its importance in life, its spiritual weight, treat it as something clear in itself, but at the same time feel certain hunger for more comprehension.

Man’s response is a desire to become a participant of the ‘heavenly sacraments’: the mass *In Circumcisione Domini* links the celebration of the mystery of Incarnation, through which redemption took place, with the participation in what it contains: *caelestium sacramentorum participium consequi mereamur*.⁵⁰ The concern that the participation in sacraments has to be well-earned is also heard at the end of *illatio* – equivalent of Roman *praefatio* – from the fourth Easter Sunday:

Per quam originem quamdam evangelicæ imitationis adepti, cælestium secretorum sacramenta discentes, laudes quas tibi in gloria Patris cum Sancto Spiritu permanenti Angeli et Archangeli canunt, nos quoque imitati cælestium beatitudinem persolvamus cum Seraphim ita *dicente*⁵¹.

2. LITURGY IN THE SERVICE OF *ARCANA MYSTERII*

In the above mentioned *illatio* we can find the term *secretorum*, which not only expresses what we used to translate as secret but also points to another, incredibly deep term typical of auto-comprehension of liturgy: *ob arcana mysterii tui, Christe Domine Deus noster, a te collata inspiratione poscentes; deficit in contuitu acies, in intellectu visus, in relatione virtus, in narratione sermo*⁵². When using the term *arcanum*, Spanish rite wants to draw attention to the personal centre where only God has access (that is how it is linked to secret), but

48 *In XX Dominico de cotidiano*, oratio admonitionis.

49 *In II Dominico quadragesimæ*, oratio admonitionis.

50 *In Circumcisione Domini*, oratio admonitionis: ut mysterium incarnationis eius pro nostræ salutis redemptione celebratum, augeat in nobis gaudia nunquam ulterius finienda, et vota multiplicet indisrupta; ut dum officii impensius mancipamur, cælestium sacramentorum participium consequi.

51 *In quarto Dominico Paschæ*, *illatio*.

52 *In diem sanctorum Petri et Pauli*, post pridie.

it is also about the depth of each celebration (it is in this context that the term Paschal *arcana* appears). And all this so that we never stop thinking about what is important, fundamental, what constitutes *res*, so that the attention concentrated on *signa* would not become idolatric, cut off from the roots. Liturgy should allow its participant access the source of mystery. This connection with mystery marks out the channels of the ecclesial *conversatio Dei*, the way of life of the Church that reads the sense of mysteries by removing it from the providential plan of salvation: that is why one of the prayers points out: *qui Ecclesiam tuam sanctam catholicam tanto eam tibi redemptionis eius mysteriorum celebritate iunxisti*.

3. MATURING TO THE FULL UNDERSTANDING OF MYSTERIUM

Having presented in the prayer *post pridie* of the mass *Apparitio Domini* various “appearances” of the Lord during his earthly life, His revelation in front of people in the mysteries of public life (born from the Virgin, shown to shepherds, known in the power of miracles, announced by a star etc.), sees in them a clear indication for the Church, whose programme formulates the Spanish rite in the following way: *ut sacratae sollemnitatis gratia ita suscipiat Ecclesia tua nunc gaudia, ut praetulit quondam mysteria*.⁵³ The Church is happy because of the presence of the Lord who allows people to recognise him and it is supposed to be inspired by the grace of ceremony to carry these mysteries in front of people because they are their light. The verb used here, *praetulit* (from *praefero*), means to anticipate, wish, welcome, and it reflects the task of the Church to carry these mysteries of Jesus Christ into every epoch, soak them in like a sponge, and anticipate this way the final appearance of the Lord in glory, which is so important for the liturgical Mozarabic sensitivity. The above mentioned “glory” of celebration carries out the configuration between the followers and Jesus Christ, and enables their progress on the path of faith.⁵⁴ It is highlighted by the liturgical exegesis of what happened to the disciples going to Emaus: although paradoxically it seems that they are going forward on their way, in fact – as liturgy points out – they are going backwards on *via fidei*. That is when Christ appears and corrects the course of their journey and makes them aware of the sense of *mysterium*.⁵⁵

53 *In Apparitione Domini, Annus secundus*, post pridie.

54 Cf. J. FLORES, “La celebración de la eucaristía según el Misal Hispano-Mozárabe”, in *Nova et vetera*, 46 (1998), 291-302.

55 Cf. F. M. AROCENA, “La misa hispanica *Si credimus*. Un ejemplo de la ruminatio litúrgica de la Escritura”, in *Scripta Theologica*, 2 (2000), 631-642.

For Mozarabic sensitivity, mystery is not a closed reality but is open to its liturgical fulfilment. That is why the period of Advent, as pointed out by J. Pinell⁵⁶, is lived in analogy not to the Lent but to the Easter Lent: in both cases it is about becoming mature to fully embrace the mystery: incarnation (*mysterium pulchrum*⁵⁷) in advent and *consumatio* of the Paschal mystery in the Pentecost. That is why one of the masses has the courage to talk about the growth of faith (literally vegetation) in the already mentioned *mysterium*:

Semper quidem, dilectissimi fratres, pia ad Dominum gratulatione, et sollicita ad Deum suum respicere debet affectio. Sed nunc præcipue mens ardentior, spes promptior, fides præsentis mysterii recordatione vegetior....

This is the kind of vigour of sacramental grace (*vigeat gratia sacramenti*) that liturgy calls for⁵⁸.

56 J. PINELL, *Liturgia hispánica*, Barcelona, Centre de Pastoral Litúrgica, 1998, 25.

57 *In quinto Dominico Paschae*, illatio.

58 *In I Dominico de cotidiano*, alia.